

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

### FROM THE DIRECTOR ACQUISITION SUPPORT CENTER

This issue of *Army AL&T* focuses on a topic that greatly impacts the Army, especially the Army Acquisition Corps—the Objective Force. If you haven't done so already, be sure to read the article on Page 2 titled "The Objective Force: A Holistic Approach to Army Transformation," which effectively illustrates the goals of the Objective Force. Understanding how this Armywide concept is progressing will help us successfully do our part as acquisition professionals. In addition, understanding this concept will help us develop a stronger connection with warfighters because we will have a greater awareness of what they need to successfully carry out their Objective Force mission. I cannot stress enough how critical it is for the entire acquisition workforce to establish and maintain this connection with the warfighter.

If this is your first time reading *Army AL&T*, be sure to pass it on to your colleagues so that they can become educated about our goals and purpose. I also encourage you to share this publication with your industry counterparts as well as any students and professors at your local colleges and universities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of those individuals who submitted applications for the Acquisition Career Experience (ACE) Program. This is a wonderful opportunity for undergraduates focusing on a career in acquisition to work in the field and learn from experienced professionals. For those interested in more information about this program, please go to the Acquisition Support Center's (ASC's) new Web site at <http://asc.rdaia.army.mil>, click on **Career Management Division**, and then click on **ACE**.

Please note that the ASC Web site is continually being revised and improved to better serve you. Check it often or make it your default home page. One feature on this Web site that you will particularly want to review is the U.S. Army Acquisition Workforce Campaign Plan. This is a living document that will evolve regularly to meet the requirements of the acquisition workforce and the warfighter. If you have comments or suggestions regarding this plan, forward them to MAJ Marko Nikituk at [marko-nikituk@us.army.mil](mailto:marko-nikituk@us.army.mil).

During the period when this issue went to press, we held our 2003 Army Acquisition Workforce Conference in Atlantic City, NJ. Be sure to check out the highlights of this event in the May-June 2003 issue of *Army AL&T*.

**COL Mary Fuller**  
Director  
Acquisition Support Center

### ATAP Selectees Named

The Army Acquisition Support Center is pleased to announce the newest participants in the FY03 Acquisition Tuition Assistance Program. These participants were selected by the October 2002 board and began their educational opportunity in January 2003. Congratulations to the following selectees:

Allgor, Doris	Hutchison, Michael
Austin, Deborah	Klitzke, Donald
Balderas, Aaron	Marken, Shelley
Bruce, Sandra	Maxwell, Cassandra
Busha, Judith	Meade, Elyse
Campbell, Richard	Paskman-Syms, Laura
Curran, Tookie	Rodriguez, Maria
Davis, Ronald	Smith, Edna
Fayaud, Gary	Spencer, Rosanne
Gholson, Pauline	Tragesser, Suzanne
Harris, Stanley	Vann, Vernon
Hauser, Joan	Walker, Vicki
Heartley, Linda	Walters, Sherrie
Hobbs, Annette	Williams, Harold
Hoffman, Wayne	Williams, Paulette

### Applying For The Tuition Assistance Program

The FY02 Acquisition Tuition Assistance Program (ATAP) Competitive Selection Board met in October 2002 to select ATAP applicants who will receive funding to begin the program in January 2003. Of particular interest is the board's report on trends seen in application packages under consideration. Trends noted in the report represent the board's general consensus as to what can be improved in the applications as well as recommendations for strengthening future board packages. Note that the ATAP board is needs-based and that appropriateness of training is an important board consideration.

Ideal ATAP candidates are those who progress in their career fields by concentrating on statutory and education requirements. Statutory requirements include certification in the primary career field in addition to meeting the business hour requirement. In effect, the educational opportunity should meet not only the needs of the requesting acquisition professional, but also the needs of the Army.

The board noted that there was a diverse applicant pool and that candidates requested funding of ATAP opportunities from a single business course up to a master's degree. This indicates that ATAP opportunity information reaches a broad Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) audience.

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The board also noted that most career fields were represented in application packages; however, the largest representation came from the contracting field. In addition, the board reported that education requested to meet certification requirements, coupled with evidence of high past performance and a balance of experience and training, were major factors in selection. Supervisory comments were also seen as very important and were used as a discriminator when making selections. Further, the board looked closely at résumés and was positively influenced by those that were well-written and addressed ATAP application requirements.

In contrast, detractors from applications included poorly prepared packages and information discrepancies. This was particularly true when comparing the Acquisition Career Record Brief (ACRB) to the required résumé. Note that while the ACRB is an essential snapshot of the acquisition professional's career, the résumé provides an excellent opportunity to outline the depth and breadth of work experience and training not seen on the ACRB. It is strongly suggested that each applicant take the time to ensure that gaps in information are closed on the ACRB and that employment history in Section IX on the ACRB match positions listed on the résumé. Inconsistencies may cast doubt on the validity of the submitted information.

The board also noted three issues that detract from an applicant's package. First, missing supervisory comments were detrimental to applicants' selection potential during the review process. Therefore, supervisors are greatly encouraged to complete this important field as a way of bolstering an applicant's chance for selection. Second, there were instances in which applicants lacked the required training that would lead to certification and yet were trying to seek education funding. Finally, educational requests that appeared inconsistent with career goals—and did not offer sufficient explanation—were not looked on favorably.

For those individuals required to have a Senior Rater Potential Evaluation (SRPE), the board noted that the SRPE should emphasize the applicant's future potential rather than current or past performance. Specific rather than vague comments are also encouraged. The ideal SRPE includes not only supervisory comments that address future potential, but also applicant comments that highlight the particular strengths that will contribute to future professional growth.

In summary, the board will learn about applicants through their application package. Because there is no opportunity to explain inconsistencies, a complete and detailed application package is highly recommended. For assistance in putting together your application, con-

tact your regional Acquisition Career Manager or the National Capital Region Customer Support Office. Contact numbers are found on the Acquisition Support Center's home page at <http://asc.rdaisa.army.mil>. (Click on **Organization/POC**.)

### Certification Requirements Update

Two new acquisition career fields are being added to the acquisition family in FY03: Facilities Engineering (FE), and Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering, Science—Systems Engineering and Technology Manager (SPRDE S&T). The certification requirements for these fields are in the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Catalog at <http://www.dau.mil>.

The following changes have also been made to the certification requirements for other career fields:

- The certification standard checklist now requires CON 100 (Shaping Smart Business Arrangements) as a prerequisite for CON 101 (Basics of Contracting) to obtain Level I certification in contracting. However, if individuals completed CON 101 as of Oct. 1, 2002, they are not required to take CON 100 for certification purposes.
- The certification standard checklist for the Information Technology (IT) career field in the 2003 DAU Catalog incorrectly lists Software Acquisition Management (SAM) courses as part of the certification checklist for the IT career field. As of Nov. 15, 2002, SAM courses are desired but not mandatory. However, these courses are expected to be mandatory in the future (most likely starting Oct. 1, 2004).
- The certification standard checklist for the Program Management career field modified its Level I experience requirement to state that applicants must possess "1 year of acquisition experience." In effect, this opens Level I certification to all Acquisition and Technology Workforce members who have 1 year of acquisition experience and have completed ACQ 101.
- The certification standard checklist for the Test and Evaluation career field now indicates that there is a positive education requirement for Level I certification.

We will keep you posted as certification changes occur. If you have questions regarding certification, contact the Acquisition Career Managers at the National Capital Region Customer Support Office. Contact numbers are found on the Acquisition Support Center home page at <http://asc.rdaisa.army.mil>. (Click on **Organization/POC**.)

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### NCR CSO Offers Onsite Workshops

The National Capital Region Customer Support Office (NCR CSO) invites all organizations serviced within the NCR to take advantage of onsite visits to your location to discuss acquisition career management. The NCR CSO will provide a comprehensive overview on career management, including overall Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) initiatives and career-broadening opportunities. In tandem with the overview, or as a separate initiative, small interactive workshops are also offered that discuss the nuts and bolts of career management. This forum provides more detail on all aspects of career management and encourages a learning atmosphere where specific issues are addressed, with greater focus on the Acquisition Career Record Brief (ACRB) and Individual Development Plan (IDP). The NCR CSO will also tailor workshops to supervisors or around organizational needs. Overview and workshop topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- AAC initiatives;
- Acquisition position list numbers;
- Continuous learning (individuals and supervisors);
- Establishing and maintaining the ACRB;
- Establishing and maintaining the IDP (individuals and supervisors);
- Certification requirements;
- Certification process;
- Applying for Defense Acquisition University quotas;
- Fulfillment;
- Equivalency;
- Acquisition and leadership training;
- Applying for a board;
- Acquisition, education, training and experience (AETE);
- Acquisition Tuition Assistance Program (ATAP);
- Competitive Development Group (CDG);
- Senior Service College;
- Leadership and development;
- Training With Industry;
- Corps Eligible (CE) membership requirements and application procedure; and
- AAC requirements and application procedure.

The NCR CSO offers follow-on sessions with work-force members to discuss specific items of interest relevant to the acquisition professional's career. The NCR CSO will work with you to provide exactly the site visit that your organization requires. For additional information about this opportunity or to schedule a site visit by NCR CSO Acquisition Career Managers, contact Anne Galway at [anne.galway@us.army.mil](mailto:anne.galway@us.army.mil) or at (703) 704-0121.

### *From The ASC FA51 Proponency Officers . . .*

#### **Level II Certification News**

FA51 officers should apply early for ACQ 201 (Intermediate Systems Acquisition) and PMT 250 (Program Management Tools), which are required for Level II certification in the Program Management career field. There are generally waiting lists for both of these courses, so officers who need them must plan ahead. Both of these courses are prerequisites for PMT 352 (Program Management Office Course), which is required for Level III certification in the Program Management career field.

#### **AAC Flag**

All Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) organizations authorized to obtain the new AAC flag should have done so by now. For additional information, contact MAJ John Lemondes at the e-mail address or phone number listed below.

#### **New Contact Information**

Many elements of the Acquisition Support Center (ASC) recently moved from Crystal City, VA, to Fort Belvoir, VA. Up-to-date contact information for ASC's FA51 proponency officers follows.

51A MAJ John Lemondes: (703) 704-0103, DSN 654-0103, or [john.lemondes@us.army.mil](mailto:john.lemondes@us.army.mil)

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